THE WORLD'S BEST-SELLING DIGITAL PHOTO MAGAZINE

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Photography week

INSPIRATION | IDEAS | IN-DEPTH REVIEWS

SONY UNVEILS THE A7C II
NEW COMPACT POWERHOUSE ARRIVES ALONGSIDE 60MP A7C R

TRAVEL LIGHT

PRO TIPS FOR CAPTURING STUNNING IMAGES OF YOUR ADVENTURES WITH MINIMAL KIT

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Photography week

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Welcome to the world's No.1 weekly digital photography magazine. If you're already a reader, thanks for your continued support and involvement; if you're new to *Photography Week*, you've come to the right place! In addition to expert advice, brilliant tips and step-by-step tutorials, every issue features interactive galleries of brilliant photos, how-to videos on essential shooting and editing techniques, and in-depth reviews of the latest camera kit.

But that's not the whole story. *Photography Week* is more than a magazine – it's a community of like-minded people who are passionate about photography. To get involved, just follow any of the links below and share your shots and comments.

Jeff Meyer, Editor

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We're more than just a magazine – read on and discover the many ways you can interact with and enjoy *Photography Week*

Photography week

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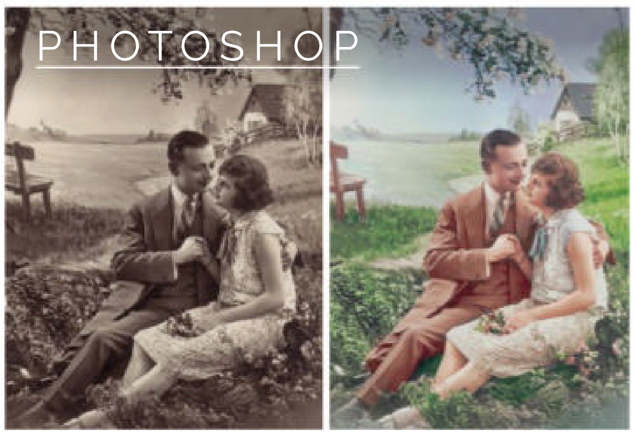

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SONY FE 70-200MM F4 MACRO G OSS II

Every photographer needs a 70-200mm in their bag, but do they also need a f/2.8 maximum aperture? We drop down a stop to check out Sony's new and improved f/4 option

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SONY ANNOUNCES THE A7C II AND A7C R

New full-frame compact unveiled alongside high-resolution sibling

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THE A7C II IS SONY'S NEW COMPACT POWERHOUSE

Second-generation full-frame model arrives alongside high-resolution A7C R

The Sony A7C II packs much of the A7 IV's tech into a more compact and travel-friendly body.

© Sony

Sony has unveiled two new full-frame additions to its Alpha mirrorless camera line: the A7C II, and the A7C R, which is essentially a higher-resolution version of the same camera. There's also a new FE 16-35mm F2.8 GM II lens, a wide-angle zoom that completes the second generation of Sonys trinity of lenses.

Succeeding the A7C, the A7C II sports much of Sony's latest tech that's also found in the A7 IV, in a more travel-friendly body. Sony has gone with a 33MP BSI Exmor R sensor for the A7C II, which is a bump from the 24MP sensor in the A7C. This is teamed with its now tried-and-tested Bionz XR and AI processor combo, with Sony says will make the A7C II up to eight times faster at processing images than the A7C, and enable the camera to shoot up to 10fps with continuous autofocus and auto exposure, and with a buffer of 1,000-plus JPEGs or 44 raws.

The A7C II is also able to create in-camera focus-stacked images of up to 299 frames. When it comes to ISO, the A7C II settles on Sony's current standard of 100-51,200 (expandable to 102,400).

The body is slightly redesigned from the original model, although you might have to look hard for the changes. Sony says the new body is now more ergonomic, with a new front command dial and additional custom button. If you're thinking this camera looks oddly familiar, it's because this is pretty much the same design that debuted recently on the APS-C-Sony A6700.

The rangefinder-style EVF remains, with a 2.36 million-dot OLED display and a 0.7x magnification, which is a small but welcome improvement over the A7C, which didn't have the best viewfinder experience going. The camera itself has 759 phase-detection points which cover 94% of the sensor, and can focus down in low light down to -4.0EV (which is one more stop than A7C).

On the rear is a 3.0-inch 1.03 million-dot touchscreen panel that uses Sony's latest and much-improved touchscreen interface with quick menus. The A7C II has again been stuck with just the one SD UHS-II card, which is bound to annoy some users, although thankfully the SD slot is on the side, and not under the battery, alongside HDMI, headphone, microphone, and USB-C ports.

Very much a hybrid camera aimed at content creators, the A7C II offers a range of video options, topping out at 4K 60p video. It's also capable of 4K 30p with oversampling down to FHD video in 120p, and the usual shooting options are present, with 10-Bit 4:2:2, S-Cinetone and S-Log for a more controlled post-production workflow.

The A7C II has up to 7-stop in-body stabilisation for stills and video, as well as Sony's Active Stabilization for video, which applies a slight crop to the image. It can also pull off all the tricks from Sony's other recent cameras including Auto Framing, in-camera LUTs, soft skin, focus-breathing correction, and four-channel audio recording.

The A7C R is essentially the same camera as the A7C II, with a larger 60MP sensor.

© Sony

The Sony A7C R, meanwhile, feels very much like Sony taking a punt on a build-it-and-they-will-come strategy. The A7C R is the exact same body as the A7C II, except Sony has decided to switch out that camera's 33MP sensor for the 60MP one from the Sony A7R V - making this one of the highest-resolution cameras you can buy.

The 60MP sensor is again combined with the Bionz XR and AI processor. In an interesting twist on the formula, this sensor now has multiple resolutions, which means the A7C R can shoot 15, 26, or 60-megapixel images using the full width of the sensor through pixel binning, not by cropping the image. This is something Leica has used on its most recent M11 cameras to good effect. The A7C R is also able to use its IBIS to create Pixel Shift images that are even larger, should you really need it.

© Sony

The A7C R's rear diaplay is a 3.0-inch 1.03 million-dot touchscreen.

Most of the specs for the A7C R follow that of the lower-resolution A7C II, with a few notable exceptions due to the increased pixel size of that 60MP sensor. On the A7C IIR, the ISO caps out at 32,000 (64,000 expandable), the shutter speed is also slightly slower at just 8fps with continuous autofocus and autoexposure, and the sensor has a reduced 693 AF points that only cover 79% of the sensor. When it comes to video, the A7C IIR is also capable of 4K 60p, but this time with a 1.2x crop; 4K 30p and below, however, can use the full width of the sensor.

The A7C II is available to pre-order now, priced at £2,100 / $2,299 body-only, or £2,350 / $2,499 with the Sony FE 28-60mm f/4-5.6 lens. The A7C R will cost £3,200 / $2,999 body-only.

HOLD THE FORT
Before your trip, research locations, events and activities to add to your itinerary, so that you can shoot unforgettable places such as Alanya in Turkey

CARRY LESS, SHOOT MORE

When exploring the world, simplify your travel photography by capturing stunning scenery with minimal gear

Words by: Kim Bunermann

When embarking on a new adventure, your camera is the ideal companion for capturing memories and experiences that will last a lifetime. Travel photography is a thrilling but difficult genre that demands mastery of various styles, including landscape, architecture, portrait and street photography. All of these elements are essential in achieving the main objective of travel photography: to tell the story of your trip, and capture the essence of the places you visit.

To accomplish this, your images should aim to reflect the distinctive aspects of a location, showcasing its unique beauty, while also portraying the mood and feeling of the culture and people. Together, these aspects evoke a sense of the place that differentiates travel photography from documentary photography, which aims to capture a society more objectively and highlight social and political elements.

But taking photographs in exotic, faraway places brings its own problems. While it can be tempting to pack all our usual kit and stay within our comfort zone, this could be a problem when packing for a flight. And besides, no one wants to hike with a backpack full of heavy lenses. Fortunately, with our expert tips and tricks, you'll be able to approach your next adventure with confidence, overcoming challenges by adapting your photographic skills.

FEATURE

GET TRAVEL-READY

Planning ahead and travelling light are two important prerequisites for successful travel photography – even if you have to leave kit at home

STAY FOCUSED
Don't just photograph the landscape and architecture; try to incorporate special moments like this to support your travel stories

© Julia Volk

Travelling light is key, even when it comes to your camera gear. However, you don't have to compromise on functionality. There are various ways to achieve your objectives with minimal yet versatile gear. Most important is to know how to make the most of what you have, using your gear to its fullest potential. Make sure you pack the essentials, including your camera, lens, extra batteries and an SD card. If you're looking for a camera that's perfect for travel photography, the Sigma fp L weighs just 427g (0.94lbs) and is perfect for framing on-the-go moments without weighing you down.

When travelling, it's always a good idea to pack more than one memory card. Not only does this provide insurance against data loss due to any damage, it also allows for a personalised organisation system. Assigning each card to a specific location can help streamline the organisation process, especially if you plan to photograph the same subject multiple times. It's also crucial to have a backup plan in place; external memory devices or cloud services will guarantee that your cherished photos are secure while you're on the move.

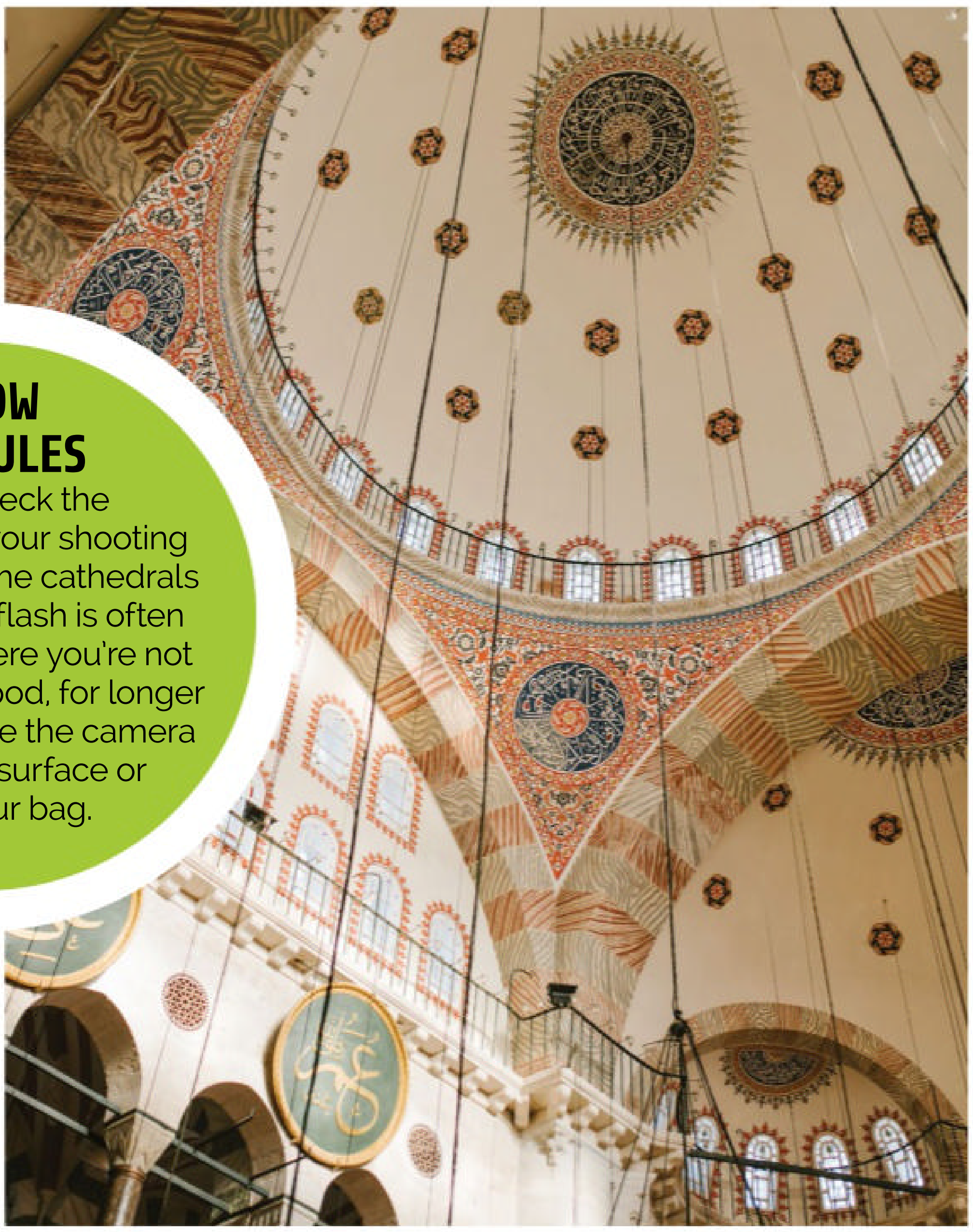
When it's finally time to embark on your journey, it's crucial to have your camera gear organised and secured. When taking a flight, it's highly recommended to keep your equipment with you at all times. This way, you avoid any risk of losing gear, or having it damaged, as a result of checking it in with your luggage. Remember to be cautious when travelling by car and make sure that your equipment isn't visible from outside, and keep your gear close when using public transport.

CHOOSE YOUR LENS

Be ready for any situation by packing a versatile all-rounder

For travel photography, you don't want to be burdened with the bulk and weight of multiple lenses, and the hassle of changing them. It's a good idea to invest in a versatile lens such as the Tamron 18-400mm f/3.5-6.3 Di II VC HLD, which is perfect for framing a variety of shots, from capturing the beauty of a landscape to intricate architectural details and portraits.

GET TRAVEL-READY CONTINUED



KNOW THE RULES

Always check the regulations at your shooting location – in some cathedrals and mosques, flash is often prohibited. Where you're not able to use a tripod, for longer exposures, place the camera on a steady surface or even your bag.

Below-left **CAPTURE THE JOURNEY** To provide viewers with a glimpse into your travels, it's a good idea to take out your camera even before arriving at your destination

Above-left **PROVIDE HISTORIC INSIGHTS** Each country is individually characterised by its history and culture. Convey this in your images to create an overall impression

Above-right **GO BEYOND YOUR EYE LEVEL** Widen your view by looking up to discover new photographic angles to capture the beauty of fine architectural details

CREATE A SHOT LIST

Research an area's architecture, traditions and events for inspiration. Create a list of subjects and a schedule for each day, allocating enough time to take images. Navigating crowds of tourists and identifying the right composition requires patience.

3x © Julia Volk

CARRY IT SAFELY

Take care and protect your equipment when exploring new places

Accidents can happen at any time, which why having insurance is crucial. It gives you peace of mind to know that you're covered in case of theft, loss or damage.

When you're out in the city, carrying your camera with an adjustable strap, compact bag or camera holster will keep it protected. If you're more of an outdoors person, a camera backpack may be a more comfortable option. It distributes the weight evenly across your back, making it easier to carry your equipment on longer hikes.

TELL THE WHOLE STORY

Build a story around your travel photographs to captivate the viewer

When taking photos, it's important to remember that your audience will be seeing the images, not experiencing the moment first-hand. To truly capture the beauty of an area, it's crucial to pay attention to detail and showcase its unique characteristics. Although specific landmarks and topography define a place, it's equally vital to showcase the customs and local people that make it exceptional.

Keep in mind that while a picture may be worth a thousand words, it's the specifics and surroundings that truly bring your photographs to life. Taking notes and gathering relevant information on the go will assist you later in recalling those moments.

Depending on what you want to do with your travel photos, making notes can also bring further benefits. Magazines and other publications will need such information to publish your photographs. Even if you have, or are planning to start, a travel blog yourself, these insights are essential to help you stand out from the crowd and tell a compelling story.

Including people in your travel shots is a great way to convey emotions and feelings, whether it's capturing the amazement of tourists or locals going about their daily business. For this, it's best to act as inconspicuously as possible. As a large camera will attract attention, it's handy to use automatic modes and settings to stay more in the background.

When shooting in aperture priority mode and using ISO auto, you can still control the depth of field without the need to test settings in every other situation. Another clever method is using 'zone focus'. Here, you set the focus in advance to keep the hustle and bustle on the road sharp. Choose single-frame autofocus, and focus the lens at a distance where you expect the subject to be.

HEAD OUT EARLY

Being an early bird is helpful for capturing both bustling cities and pure nature. Early hours mean fewer tourists, a more relaxed atmosphere, and freedom, while blue and golden hours envelop the surroundings with their glowing light

GEOTAG IMAGES

Stay organised, and keep track of the places you've captured

When you're exploring a new place it's natural to constantly snap photos, but when you come to organise them, it can be difficult to remember where each shot was taken. To stay on track, activate GPS tagging in your camera settings and the location data will be automatically saved with each photo. This will prove especially handy if you plan on selling your photos online, as potential buyers will appreciate the added information. You can snap away confidently, knowing that organising your photos will be a breeze.

CONNECT WITH LOCALS

Step out of your comfort zone to offer exclusive cultural insights

To enrich your photographic story with exclusive insights, what could be better than involving the people who call a place home in your images? Through their insider perspective, you'll build a rapport with the viewer, allowing them to delve into the surroundings and gain an understanding of the local way of life and culture.

SHOOT DETAILS

Stay focused, and don't overlook little things on your adventures

New places and first impressions can be overwhelming, so don't lose your eye for the smaller aspects that might, at first, appear inconspicuous. Details are the final pieces of the puzzle that tell the story; with these glimpses, you'll bring the viewer closer to the places and not just superficially highlight them.

2x © Julia Volk

TELL THE WHOLE STORY CONTINUED

© Julia Volk

HDR ON THE GO

Create handheld HDR to enhance the colours of your travel images

1 PRIORITISE APERTURE

First, select the aperture priority mode (A mode) on your camera. This way, you can set the aperture individually and therefore frame the scene without creating differences in the depth of field between shots.

2 WATCH SHUTTER SPEED

When shooting in aperture priority mode, the shutter speed is automatically adjusted. Keep an eye on this and raise ISO settings to work with fast shutter speeds to avoid the risk of motion blur.

3 ACTIVATE IMAGE STABILISATION

Select the IS feature on the lens or camera body to compensate for camera shake and to achieve sharper results. Focus manually to avoid unwanted automatic refocusing between shots.

4 SELECT AUTOMATIC BRACKETING

Activate this function in the menu. This allows the camera to automatically take variable exposures during shooting. For optimisation, change the number of apertures and exposures.

5 FIND A STABLE POSITION

Always look through the viewfinder when shooting. If you had to leave your tripod behind and want to achieve a more stable shooting position, check whether your location offers additional support, such as walls or benches to lean against.

STAND OUT

Experiment with visual strategies to give your travel images some originality

LOCALISE LIGHT

In an unfamiliar area, apps such as Best Photo Times will help you find out how the light will fall on the scene at a given time. A graphical representation on a map gives an overview and shows the lighting effects you should expect.

INCLUDE LEAD-IN LINES
When you're composing images, pay attention to lines. These can help to draw the viewer in, and show off the subject from a new perspective

© Julia Volk

Online search engines such as Google are great tools for allowing us to explore famous landmarks and architecture around the world from the comfort of our sofas. However, these images can influence our perception of well-known subjects, and the danger is that we arrive at a location and create an identical photograph to everyone else.

Try to focus on new perspectives, approaching familiar subjects with a fresh eye. Give yourself enough time at a particular location to explore the area and experiment with different angles. To achieve captivating perspectives, disengage from the usual eye level. One effective technique is to photograph from a high vantage point. Often, you'll find art galleries with tall windows or cafes with outdoor terraces – these are perfect for elevating your photographic point of view. You could also try the opposite, by shifting the perspective further down. This way, you can also include foreground elements, such as roads of paths that lead towards to the main subject, or include objects from the surrounding area, such as flowers. These will add a degree of uniqueness to the shot, while also directing the viewer's eyes towards the key features.

To give your images extra impact, learn about the traditions and cultural interactions of the places you're visiting. Do your research, and include events and celebrations to enrich the story with a sense of adventure, context and a deeper meaning.

STAND OUT CONTINUED

WATCH THE BACKGROUND

Use a shallow depth of field to place the focus on cultural features or subjects

In order to draw attention to particular elements in the photograph, it's advisable to isolate the subject with a shallow depth of field. To blur the background as much as possible, open up the aperture to the maximum (smallest f/number). This also causes more light to fall on the sensor, so it's important to work with low ISO values to balance the exposure. This technique is particularly recommended if the background is either cluttered or dominant, making it easier for the viewer to focus on the subject.

© Julia Volk

STAY CURIOUS AND DISCOVER

Don't stick strictly to the plan – explore the surroundings freely

It's great to have a plan, but sometimes it limits your ability to explore new paths. This is particularly true when visiting unfamiliar cities. Instead of relying on Google Maps, trust your photographic intuition to uncover the hidden charm of the area. Wander down side streets or alleyways, and you may stumble upon unexpected and amazing photo opportunities.

© Julia Volk

FRAME TRAVEL ATMOSPHERES

Learn how to communicate feelings and a sense of place through your lens

Whether you're travelling in a bustling city or through beautiful countryside, capturing images that tell stories and leave an impression on viewers is what distinguishes a pro photographer from an amateur. Even with minimal gear, you can capture the mood of your trip; by experimenting with exposure times, for example, you can create images that capture movement in a scene, whether it's a fast-moving taxi in the city or a serene waterfall in a landscape.

© Julia Volk

ADD FINISHING TOUCHES

When editing your travel shots, aim to match your style and convey the atmosphere of your unforgettable trip

CREATE CONSISTENCY

After editing your first image of an adventure, use Photoshop's Color Matching tool. This function lets you select the colour scheme of your reference image and automatically apply it to any subsequent images you're editing.

"WORK ON COLOUR TEMPERATURE TO REFLECT THE LOCATION'S CHARACTERISTICS"

COLD EDIT

© Julia Volk

After your trip, you're likely to have many hundreds of images to sort through. Geotagging will help you to keep track of them, but it's best to take a moment during your trip to delete any failed shots and keep the number of images under control. To avoid having to spend hours editing your images, it's best to create presets for different lighting situations. This way, basic adjustments of brightness and contrast can be quickly optimised.

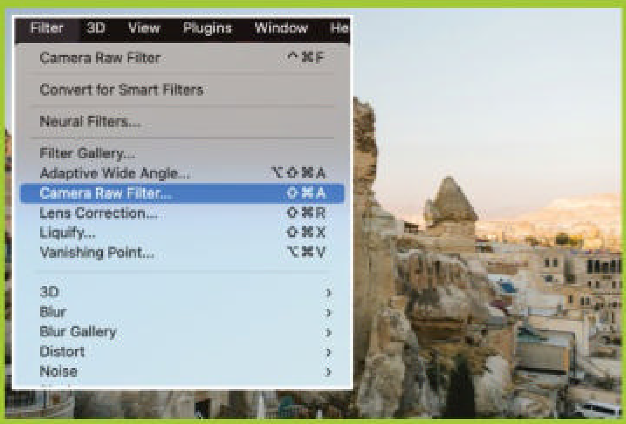
When fine-tuning, consider working on the colour temperature of images to reflect the characteristics of the location. When travelling to different regions, the sun has a different effect on the environment due to its position. This example is evident in most movies, which have a distinctive visual look depending on the setting. If the story takes place in Miami, you will find a contrasting image with intense colours, because the light shines vertically from the sky on the scene and provides a direct light.

Films set in more northern regions, such as Norway, have a colder colour scheme, as the blue hour is significant. Thus, it's generally recommended to use a warm colour scheme for more southern regions, and colder hues for more northern locations.

This colour adjustment is called colour grading, and the most important edits are to Curves, white balance and brightness, as well as contrast.

ADD FINISHING TOUCHES CONTINUED

COLOUR-GRADE YOUR IMAGES Keep these tips in mind when creating a more authentic look

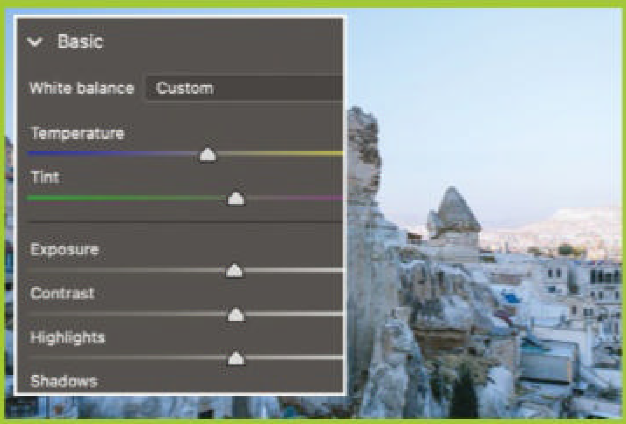


1 CAMERA RAW EDITOR

To work on your image in a more intuitive way, while still having control over the adjustments, open the image in Adobe Camera Raw, or your preferred raw editor.

2 CURVES

Select the Curve option and play around with the basic settings, including brightness, shadows, and highlights. Adjust the red and blue channels to enhance the warmth or coolness of the photo.



3 WHITE BALANCE

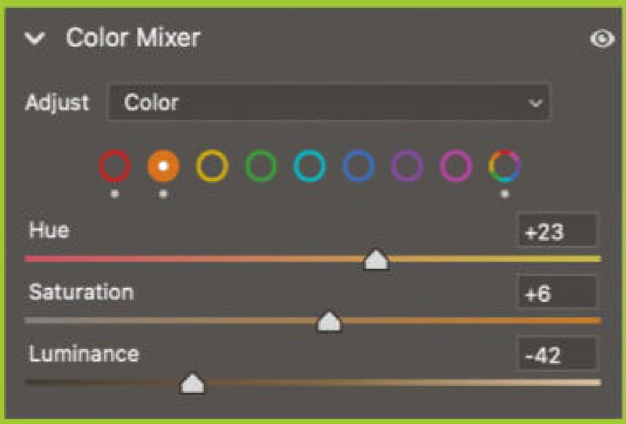
Open the Basic settings tab, and change the White balance to custom. From here, you can increase the Temperature slider to enhance the warm tones or decrease it for a cooler effect.

4 COLOR GRADING WHEEL

The Color Grading wheel offers four different options to work on: Shadows, Midtones, Highlights and Global. Take some time to experiment to find the perfect balance of settings for your shots.

5 VIBRANCE/SATURATION SLIDER

The Vibrance and Saturation sliders are found in the Basic option towards the bottom of the tab. By increasing or decreasing these values, you can easily fine-tune the colour temperature.



6 COLOR MIXER

Using the Color Mixer tool, you can adjust the hue, saturation and luminance of different shades to optimise the intensity of the individual colours in your images.

FEATURE

PRO ADVICE

Adventurous insights from Luke Miller, who captures places and moments from the air as well as with his camera

I love venturing out into the wilderness, and seeing the amazing masterpieces mother nature creates. The journey is a huge part of the process, and once you get the perfect composition, everything comes together.

My trip to Tofino, British Columbia, is an example of the journey and images coming together. We hiked up a mountain and I didn't think we'd make it before sunset, but the timing was perfect. I had an incredible view, and got some fabulous shots.

One of my favourite pieces of kit in my bag is my drone. I love the different height and angle aspects of photography it gives me. Being able to scope out an area with a bird's-eye view that you'd get from a helicopter with a piece of equipment from my backpack is incredible."

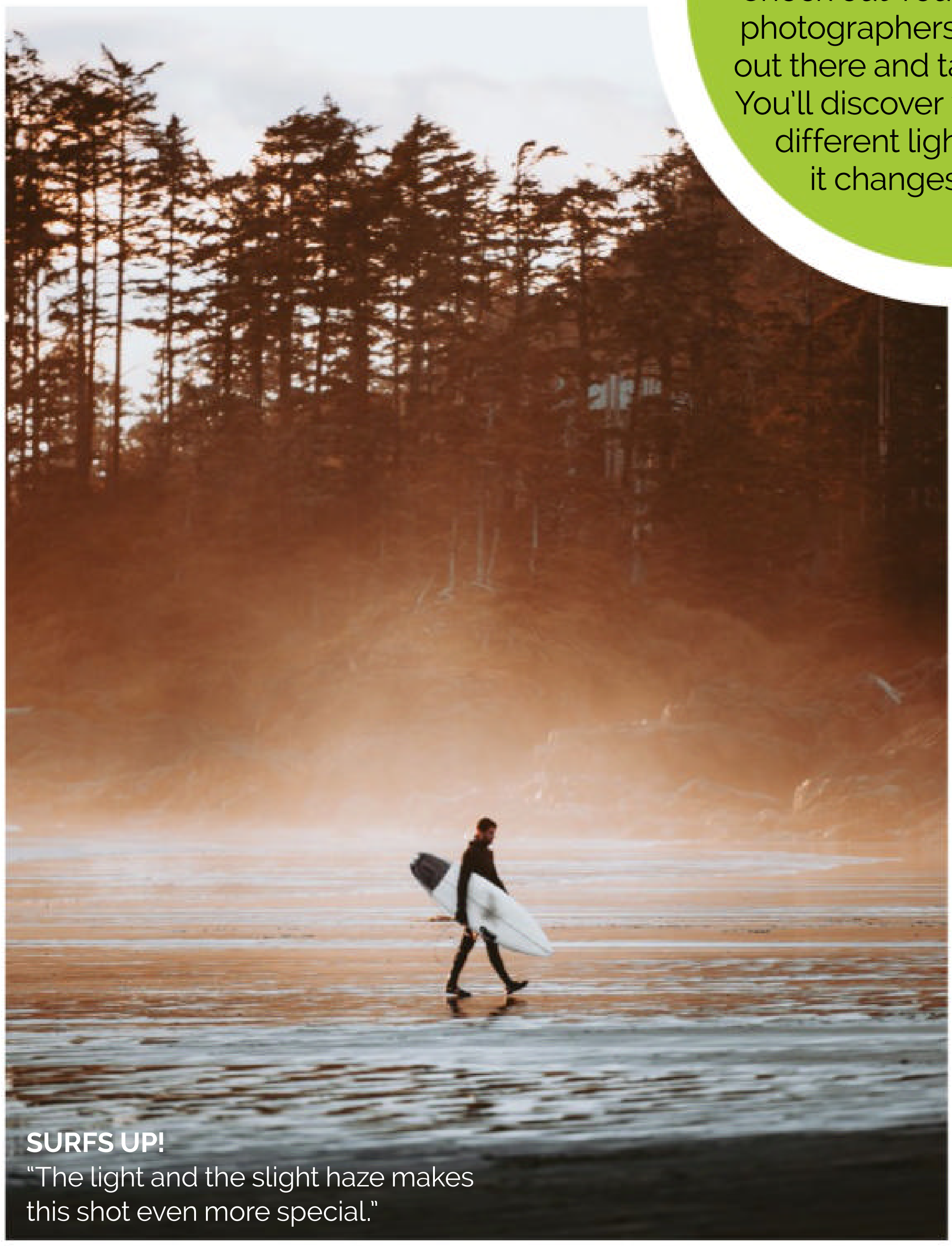
LUKE MILLER

Based in Vancouver, Luke recently captured the Pacific Northwest, from Banff in Canada to the Grand Canyon.
@bylukemiller
https://bit.ly/45kXOsc

TAKE A RIDE AROUND THE WORLD
"I highlighted the surf, the ferris wheel and the stars at the Santa Monica Pier in Los Angeles."

BEGINNER'S ADVICE

"If you're just starting out, I'd suggest having an idea in your mind of what you'd like to see. Check out YouTube videos and photographers online, then get out there and take tons of shots. You'll discover what happens in different lighting, and how it changes the image."



SURFS UP!
"The light and the slight haze makes this shot even more special."

OVERLOOKING MOVEMENTS
"From this suspension bridge in British Columbia you can view the waterfall from all areas."

3x © Luke Miller

PRO ADVICE CONTINUED

AREA CHARACTERISTICS
By including the wider area in the shot, the river and the waterfall are placed in the context of the landscape

FRESH ANGLE
Drones are great tools, allowing the viewer to experience viewpoints that can't be captured with a camera

THE EXTRA GEAR

Fly high with a drone to showcase surroundings and add dimension

Drones such as the DJI Mavic Air 2 are valuable tools for travel photographers, offering wider views of dramatic landscapes and enabling photographers like Luke to capture shots that would otherwise be impossible to frame. They're also a game-changer in terms of allowing you to scout areas to find the best location and angles for photography.

However, before taking off, it's important to practice in an open and secure area far away from mountains and water. Check the regulations in the area where you plan to use the drone, as there are legal restrictions on flying drones in some places.

© Luke Miller

UNIQUE PERSPECTIVE
From this elevated perspective, the viewer gets a better impression of how big and powerful the Cascade Falls really are

WATER SLIDE

This shot was taken with my DJI Mavic Air 2 above the Cascade Falls Regional Park in Mission, British Columbia, Canada. I've always seen shots taken at ground level, but never from above, so I decided to try it out and got this beautiful capture.

FEATURE

10 TIPS FOR SELLING YOUR TRAVEL IMAGES

Things to keep in mind if you want to earn cash from your adventures

1 SHOOT VERSATILE
Offer as much choice as you can, by varying the composition, overview, and detail in shots. If time permits, capture the same scene in different lighting.

2 CAPTURE TOURIST ATTRACTIONS
Famous landmarks are easier to sell because there's more interest. Try to capture at least one iconic shot wherever you go.

3 GET NICHE
Certain photographic subjects, such as boats, transport or food, can often find targeted buyers looking for shots of rare items in a crowded market.

4 INCLUDE NEGATIVE SPACE
Shoot some compositions where the sky, land or sea offers space. This way, magazines and newspapers can add headlines or text.

5 THINK ABOUT DOUBLE SPREADS
In landscape format, avoid placing the subject in the centre. In print publications, it will disappear in the fold of a double page.

6 SELECT HIGH QUALITY
Competition is fierce, so choose technically excellent photos. Focus on sharpness, clear compositions, and frames without noise.

7 GET IN TOUCH
Tag in magazines, tourist boards and travel guides to highlight your latest images. They often need up-to-date pictures to advertise a particular destination.

8 SELL STOCK PHOTOS
Submit your images for stock. Wirestock.io is an amalgamation of other stock photo sites, such as Getty Images, and pays royalties.

9 ADD INFORMATION
Add keywords and info, such as the city, country and date to your images. This can be included in captions to give readers context.

10 PROMOTE YOUR WORK
Create a travel blog, and upload your adventures to social media to let people know all about your recent travels and photo opportunities.

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G A L L E R Y

XPOSURE

THE WEEK'S MOST INSPIRING READER PHOTOS

COMMON TERN WITH CATCH

IAN SILVESTER

"A parent tern returning to their chicks with a freshly-caught fish.
Taken at the Blashford Lakes nature reserve in Hampshire, UK."

https://bit.ly/3StOQTI

ALHAMBRA REFLECTION

PHILIP WOOD

"Waiting for a few minutes for tour groups to pass by allowed me to shoot this great reflection photo without disturbance at one of Spain's most visited tourist sites. Luckily the water channel was turned off, so I got a perfect reflection."

https://bit.ly/3Ov32dU

EMBRACE
RICHARD HARVEY
"Shot with my Canon EF 100mm f/2.8L Macro IS USM lens. Backlight with reflector to side, three images manually focused and merged, exposure adjustments in Affinity Photo."
https://bit.ly/3DiGCWx

NON SMOKING CAR

LACHLAN KAY

"Taken at the Glenreagh Mountain Railway rolling stock yards in New South Wales, Australia. Five-shot HDR, processed using Photomatix."
https://bit.ly/3OyDXPb

FACEBOOK
http://bit.ly/39py9lg

FLICKR
http://bit.ly/2VIgsJO

PHOTOGRAPHY WEEK WANTS YOUR PHOTOS!

Taken a portrait you're particularly proud of? Shot a sensational sunset you'd like to show off? Then join the *Photography Week* Facebook community and share your best photos today! You'll get feedback from fellow readers and the *Photography Week* team, plus the chance to appear in Xposure, or even on our cover!

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IT'S COOL, THAT

THE BEST THING WE'VE SEEN THIS WEEK

Street Lights, Ottawa by Gareth Jones, Winner, Architecture

My Copyright by Patrice Quillard, Overall winner

Childhood by Joy Saha, Winner, Street

Segovia by Helena García Huertas, Golden Mention, Architecture

Images © The photographer and courtesy Black and White Photo Awards

BROODING PRIMATE CAPTURED IN GLORIOUS, MENACING MONO

Black and White Photo Awards announces stunning selection of winning images

If you needed any convincing that black-and-white photography can convey drama and atmosphere in a way that just isn't possible with colour, the winning image in this year's Black and White Photo Awards should do the trick.

The captivating, somewhat menacing-looking portrait of a gelada, a species of Ethiopian primate, was captured by Patrice Quillard. "For a fleeting moment, he turned towards me, locking me in his intense gaze, and I comprehended the sheer dominance he held over his troop," Quillard recalls. "It was an unforgettable instant – a snapshot of the essence I sought to capture."

Some 1,700 photographers from 92 countries entered around 3,000 images in this year's contest across five categories: Architecture, Street, Portrait, Fauna and Flora, and Landscape. Click the link to see all the winning and commended images at the competition website.

SEE MORE IMAGES
https://bit.ly/3R4uYYX

HEARTS IN THEIR EYES

James Paterson shows you how to create custom-shaped catchlights

30 MINS

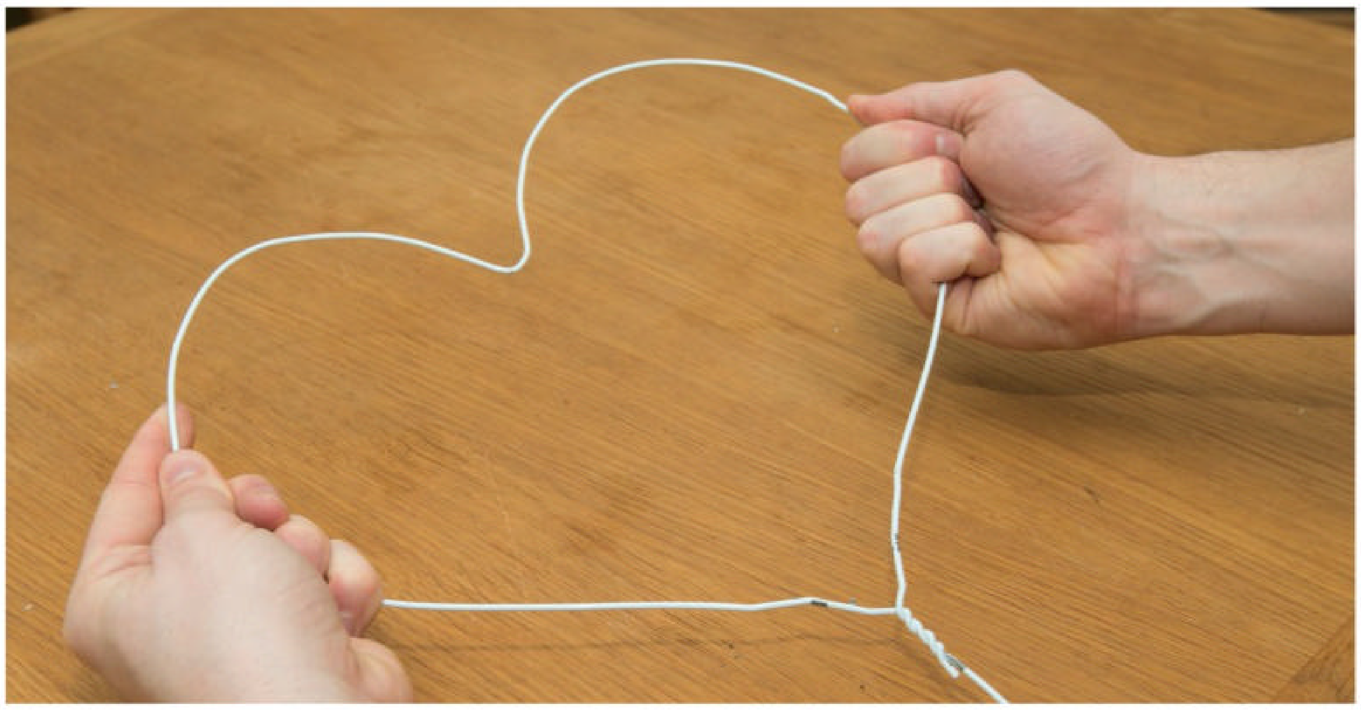
It's often said that eyes are the most important feature in a portrait. When you're shooting portraits you should always be looking for ways to draw attention to them, and one way we can do this is by making sure they have catchlights. These are the tiny reflected highlights we see in a person's eyes, and while they may be small, these little sparks draw the viewer in and bring the subject to life, which is why you'll see catchlights in most good portraits.

Catchlights are, of course, created by the surrounding lights. This could be anything that emits or reflects strong light, such as a lamp, a window, flash, or reflections from sunlight.

If you want to learn about portrait lighting, catchlights can tell you a lot. Look closely at any good portrait and from the position and shape of the catchlights you'll be able to determine the number of lights used, their shape, where they were placed, and whether they were large or small. Most of the time catchlights will be square or circular, as these are the shapes of most light sources, but you can make much more creative catchlights if you like, simply by changing the shape of the light source.

So here's a great project to try out at home. Use fairy lights to shape your catchlights (fun fact: this very technique was used to create the multiple catchlights in Galadriel's eyes in the Lord of the Rings films). All you need are a few LED fairy lights, an old wire coat hanger, and a macro or zoom lens that allows for close-ups. By shaping the wire and attaching your LED lights you can customise the reflected specks of light to your own design, and add extra sparkle to your portraits.

STEP BY STEP CREAT CUSTOM CATCHLIGHTS



1

BEND IT, SHAPE IT...

Bend a piece of wire or an old metal coathanger into the shape you want your catchlight to be – coathangers are ideal as they have ready-made handles. Try to keep the shape simple – if it's too complex it'll be difficult to make out when reflected as a tiny catchlight.

2

ATTACH THE LIGHTS

Double the fairy lights up a few times, then run them along the shape. Use sticky tape to attach the lights to the metal frame. Make sure the lights are LEDs, as they won't heat up like old-fashioned fairy lights. And, of course, be careful when using electrical wiring.

3

SEE FOR YOURSELF

Turn on the LED lights to see how they look. You can check the effect by holding it up to your face and using your phone's 'selfie' camera to see how it's reflected in your eye. If the LEDs are looking too scattered, tuck them in tighter to create a more a clearly defined shape.

QUICK TIP!

Lighting a face from above is the most natural angle, even if the subject is lying down, so position your lights above eye level.

STEP BY STEP CREAT CUSTOM CATCHLIGHTS

4

AIM HIGH

The light from the LEDs won't be very strong, so you may need to use a high ISO. One simple way to do this is to use manual mode, set a wide aperture (in this case f/3.3), and a fast shutter speed of at least 1/100 sec. Now enable Auto ISO – this way, the ISO will be adjusted depending on the ambient light.

5

PLAY WITH POSITIONS

Bring the lights in close to your subject and move them around to see how different positions affect the shape and clarity of the catchlight in the subject's eye. You could also try including the lights in the corner of the frame to add a few bright spots of bokeh.

6

CAPTURE THE SPARKLE

When you're working at close quarters depth of field becomes very limited, even at narrow apertures. This means precise focusing is critical, and even more so if your subject is moving. Select a focus point over the closest eye, and make sure the lashes are sharp.

MIXING COLOUR TEMPERATURES

The light from LEDs is a similar colour temperature to tungsten bulbs. If you're concerned about choosing the correct white balance, shoot in raw so that you can easily correct any colour casts in post-production. You can also get creative by mixing colour temperatures – here, the light from a window has given the background a blue colour that contrasts with our subject.

PHOTOSHOP

LEARN ESSENTIAL EDITING SKILLS FAST!

WATCH THE VIDEO
https://bit.ly/3OYs9pw

HOW TO...

HAND-TINT OLD PHOTOS

James Paterson shows you how to get the best from Photoshop's spookily good Colorize filter

Before colour film, hand-tinting photographs was a specialist job. Painters would painstakingly add splashes of colour to prints – or, in the case of moving images – directly onto the roll of film using tiny brushes. These days, we can add colour to our old photos by using a simple Photoshop technique, and the Colorize filter can do much of the work for us. As one of Photoshop's powerful Neural Filters, it uses artificial intelligence to recognize people and objects in a photo, and colour them accordingly.

Like other automated tools in Photoshop, the command works brilliantly on some photos, and less so on others. But even if the results aren't perfect, the filter gives you a solid starting point for further manual edits, as you'll disover in this issue's video tutorial. As well as fine-tuning the application of colour in the command, we can make use of other tools like the Color Replacement brush.

Before you begin, you'll need to digitize your old prints with a scanner or camera. Alternatively, if you want to experiment, you can find lots of old photos online. We used an image from www.pixabay.com (search for 1513018), and you can also find free downloadable old photos at Wikimedia Commons.

EXPERT TIP

Skies are often completely blown out in old prints, so there's no detail there to work with. If you want to add your own detail, why not try using the Sky Replacement Tool? Go to Edit > Sky Replacement, and choose a sky to add to the scene. Choose a sky that suits the scene, either by using the list of default skies or by loading in your own photos. Fine-tune the colours to match the land with the sky, then add a tonal effect on top to bring everything together.

GEAR

LENS TEST

EXPERT OPINION ON THE LATEST KIT

LENS MOUNT: **SONY E (FE)**

SONY FE 70-200MM F4 MACRO G OSS II

A worthy upgrade to the original lens

www.sony.co.uk £1,749/$1,698

The Sony FE 70-200mm F4 Macro G OSS II has a tough act to follow. The original had good glass, fast autofocus, decent optical image stabilisation and upmarket handling, though we were underwhelmed by the lens's edge/corner sharpness at both ends of the zoom range. This Mark II version sets out to take everything up a notch or two.

Key features

The Mark II shaves 15% off the length and 46g off the weight of the original. It features 19 elements in 13 groups, including three ED (Extra-low Dispersion) elements and a Super ED element, with the overall aim of boosting sharpness, contrast and colour quality while minimising chromatic aberrations. Another upgrade is an autofocus system that Sony claims is 20% faster than the original lens's, along with virtually silent operation for videographers. The optical stabiliser also features a mode for tracking erratically moving subjects.

Build and handling

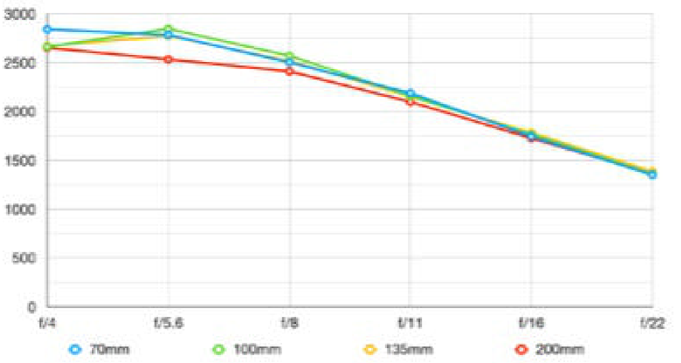
The lens feels compact and lightweight, measuring 82 x 149mm and weighing in at 749g. The zoom and focus rings work smoothly and precisely, while the lens comes with a petal-shaped hood, and has extensive weather seals to reduce the risk of dust or water getting in.

Performance

Performance is top-drawer, and there's a noticeable improvement in edge/corner sharpness over the original at both ends of the zoom range. The autofocus system is fast, ultra-precise and quiet, and while the lens doesn't have class-leading image stabilisation, all other aspects of overall performance are fabulous.

Matthew Richards

SHARPNESS



For sharpness, there was room for improvement in the original Sony 70–200mm f/4 lens. The Mark II achieves that improvement admirably, with superb levels of sharpness throughout the entire zoom range from the centre of the image frame right out to the extreme edges and corners.

FRINGING SHORT 0.24 LONG 0.26

The Mark II knocks the original lens out of the park for control over colour fringing. There's practically none to be seen at every combination of focal length and aperture setting, right out to the corners of the frame.

DISTORTION SHORT 1.56 LONG 3.27

The Mark II fares worse than the original for distortion – pincushion is noticeable at 70mm, and gets worse through the zoom range. However, automatic in-camera correction effectively makes this a non-issue.

VERDICT

Many pro photographers consider a 70-200mm f/2.8 lens to be a 'must-have' zoom, but if you don't need that extra stop this f/4 lens delivers spectacular image quality in a compact and lightweight build, for little more than half the price of the f/2.8 model, and adds 0.5x macro magnification for close-ups. All in all, the Mark II version of this lens is a cracker.

★★★★½

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ADVERTISING
UK Commerical Sales Director
Clare Dove
clare.dove@futurenet.com

Head of Market
Matthew Johnston
matthew.johnston@futurenet.com

9001

Account Sales Director
Matt Bailey
matt.bailey@futurenet.com

MARKETING
Head of Acquisitions
Helen Harding

LICENSING
International
Licensing Director
Rachel Shaw
licensing@futurenet.com

Editor Jeff Meyer
jeff.meyer@futurenet.com

Art Editor
Alvin Weetman

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Mike McNally

Reviews Editor
Gareth Bevan

Lab Manager
Ben Andrews

REGULAR CONTRIBUTORS
Mike Harris, Marcus Hawkins,
Rod Lawton, James Paterson,
Matthew Richards

SENIOR CREATIVE TEAM
Content Director
Chris George
chris.george@futurenet.com

Senior Art Editor
Warren Brown

SENIOR MANAGEMENT
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